/427 cont./

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847

/footnote 40 cont./ out whether some pajé, who foresaw the sex of the child to be born, might have intervened in the case.

• 845
847

3rd. -- That of twin children. One of the two will be eliminated; usually the second one, unless another reason counsels the contrary. For example, they will preferably eliminate the defective one, or the girl. It seems that the reason for this crime is the difficulty, for the mother, of raising two children simultaneously, with all the work that falls to her; and no other reason of magical or superstitious character (41).

[797]

41. The Missionaries have managed to save and raise some twins, and, when grown, that is, after four or five years, the parents receive them willingly, or rather they demand them.

Patrícia Vasconcelos said that the husband beats the wife when she gives birth to twin children.

[736]

Nevertheless this different way of acting causes surprise: when a child becomes orphaned by losing its mother, it will not be killed, but will pass into the care of another woman. When, on the other hand, it is a matter of twins, no woman will take on the burden of raising one of the newborn children, even when there is some newly lactating mother who has just lost her child (42).

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42. Pe. Antonio Giacone confirms this, saying that he saw new mothers emptying their breasts, or nursing some little dog, rather than feed someone else's child (Os Tucanos /The Tucano/, p. 53).

Even in these cases there does not appear to be any superstitious motive, but only the selfishness of the women and no friendship at all between them. If they take care of the orphan, it is due to the inviolable imposition of the irrevocable customs of the tribe.

[736]

/427 cont./

845 847 4th. -- That of the defective children. Any noticeable physical defect is fatal to the newborn child. And it can not be believed that it is a matter of a magical reason, but rather, on one hand, the great vanity of the parents, above all of the mother, and, on the other, the thought that it will be a burden to the tribe, which /428/ needs perfect and strong individuals and desires only those. The deaf-mutes escape more easily (as was confirmed) because it is not until much later that they manage to verify their defect.

2) The delivery.

844 The delivery is considered a physiological operation of the woman, like any other, and will not excite attention or care. In spite of the lack of hygiene and of preventive measures, these daughters of Eve seem to have the most normal delivery in the world. Many times they keep on working until that moment (43),

[797]

> 43. There was related to us by the Salesian lay Brother, the Agronomist Teotônio Ferreira, the case of an Indian woman in S. Gabriel, who worked in the clearing in the morning, bore a child in the afternoon, and on the following day came to resume her work. There are frequent cases in which the Missionaries order them to take a rest and they refuse.

and shortly afterwards they begin their normal working life again.

The men, however, will leave the maloca (or wherever the delivery takes place), perhaps leaving the parturient woman in pain, because it is ordered that they cannot witness it. For this reason, if there are guests in the maloca, the parturient woman will withdraw inside some apartment, if there is any, or they will prepare it in time for this purpose, or else she will leave the maloca in order to give birth in the forest. Just as she must also not have in the place any ax, machete, or any other object of iron or metal.

5: Goldman E-5 (1939-1940) 1963
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A woman is active until the moment her labor pains begin. I have seen a pregnant woman leave for her manioc garden behaving as though it were an ordinary gardening day, and return later in the afternoon with a newborn baby. A man is forbidden to be present at the birth of his wife's first child. At her first childbirth a woman is attended by her mother-in-law. In subsequent parturitions she may be unaccompanied, but if she does not feel too strong she invites her mother-in-law or any other woman to accompany her. A woman about to give birth must alert her husband so that he will not leave the house or do anything strenuous that would interfere magically with the delivery and the safety of the infant. The Cubeo give no particular reason for having the child born in the manioc garden. They reveal only a general apprehension that if the child were born in the maloca something would go wrong. Not all children are born in the manioc garden. In bad weather, or at night, a woman settles for the rear plaza as a birth site. Occasionally outside birth is too dangerous and the woman then retires behind screens at the rear of the maloca. The point the Indians insist on is that a child must not be born within the domain of the men. The infant must be brought from the woman's domain and installed by proper ceremony in the male domain. There is a parallel here, I believe, in the bringing in of a wife from her community to that of her husband.

Difficulties in childbirth are attributed to demonic agencies and require the assistance of a medicine man. Human sorcery does not affect childbirth. The common supernatural enemy of the woman in labor is the boa constrictor. When a woman dies in childbirth it may be explained that she had copulated in her garden at one time with a boa. The boa then comes to fetch his child. If he sees that it is a human child after all, he is angered and carries away the mother.

Childbirth (*pwäntadjü*: making a person) is a dangerous period. First the mother and then the infant are subject to supernatural perils that must be warded off. Little can be done, the Cubeo believe, to protect a woman in childbirth. The magical safeguards for the child, however, are elaborate. Primary responsibility for the safety of the newborn infant rests with the parents – with the father, in particular, since it is he who has "made" the child. Some of the precautions begin well before birth. Extra coitus, we have observed, adds to the number of children. Twins, for example, are regarded as a misfortune. Some said both twins are put to death and others said only one, the last to emerge being the one to be killed. Twins may also be born if the father, during his wife's pregnancy, has eaten plantains. If at this time he should greedily break off a bit of manioc

6: Meber and Tayler E.N-5 (1960-1961) 1967 SQ19 Tucano SQ19

partly explained by the environment in which they live – has resulted in the small unconnected settlements typical of the Indians of this region.

A headman is responsible for the provision and organization of the household. He arranges the building of the great *malocas* when it is necessary to move. He also oversees festivals and councils. In some households his actual power appeared to be slight, and it seemed to us that the average Tukano did more or less exactly as he pleased.

In the event of a headman dying, a festival is normally held in his honour after the burial. A new headman is then elected, usually the eldest son of the chief, though this decision depends on the council of elders of the household.

If the headman is the secular authority, the shaman is responsible as a spiritual one, in that he is always counteracting the influence of the evil spirits. He also cures the sick and diseased and in the event of death names the person responsible, so that revenge may be exacted. Living in a world apart, he keeps somewhat aloof from his fellow tribesmen and to enhance this sense of separation he may wear distinguishing marks.

Tukano families are small, there are seldom more than two or three children. Why more do not survive is difficult to explain, but life in the Amazonian forest is rigorous and the Indian believes that if a child cannot stand hardship at the moment of birth, it will not be able to stand that of later life. The normal custom of washing the new-born child in a stream is sometimes fatal. Moreover, should the child have any blemish or disfiguration – signs of evil to the Indians – it is all too easy for the mother to hold the infant beneath the water till it drowns. Should she have twins, this will also be the fate of the second-born, or it will be left in the forest to die. For to have more than one child at a time is to be like the animals of the forest – a terrible disgrace. In some *malocas* a dearth of children was very noticeable, especially in the lower areas of the river where the *caucheros* had greater influence.

The children assume adult responsibilities at a very early age. When we were waiting in the deserted *maloca* we noticed a small thatched shelter close to the women's entrance. It was bare and empty, and Horacio told us that this was probably a menstrual hut. They were common among the tribes in the Llanos and the women also retired to them during childbirth. Perhaps the Tukano had the same custom, but we learnt no more.

We saw no puberty rites though we did hear of a ceremony called Jurupari[1]. At certain seasons in the year the men leave for the forest to collect baskets full of chrysalises, *mojojoy*. When the women hear the men returning to the *maloca* they run screaming to the nearest plantation. Here they remain while the ceremony takes place, for they believe that the men have brought Jurupari, their god, with them, and if they or their children should see him, they will die. The men play long seven-foot flutes. One of these trumpet-like

[1] Jurupari in fact seems to be '*lingua general*' for god – and is not peculiar to the Tukano.